AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Kindly delete the present Summary of the Invention from page 6, line 16 to page 7, line 2 and substitute the following new summary:

One embodiment of the invention is useful for shipping to at least a first receiver a plurality of products maintained by the first receiver in inventory at a receiver location. The shipment may be from a first source at a first location and a second source at a second location different from the first location to the first receiver through a distribution point located at a distribution location remote from the receiver location, the first location and the second location. The first and second sources are different business entities. In such an environment, the shipment may be optimized by a method comprising the steps of determining the products required to be maintained in the inventory in response to data received from the first receiver and by calculating an amount of the products for shipment from the first source and the second source and a mode of transportation of the products from the first and second sources to the distribution point and from the distribution point to the first receiver that reduces logistics costs and that maintains the inventory within the amount of products required to be maintained according to an algorithm employing one or more metrics and the data.

Another embodiment of the invention is useful for shipping merchandise to a first receiver maintaining a first inventory of merchandise at a first receiver location and to a second receiver maintaining a second inventory of merchandise at a second receiver location. The shipment of merchandise takes place from a first source located at a first source location and from a second source located at a second source location. In such an environment, shipment is facilitated by a method comprising determining the limits of

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the merchandise required to be maintained for the first inventory according to one or more first metrics in response to first data received from the first receiver, and by determining the limits of the flow of merchandise required to be maintained for the second inventory according to one or more second metrics in response to second data received from the second receiver. An amount of merchandise is calculated for shipment from the first and second sources and a mode of transportation of the merchandise from the first and second sources to the first and second receivers that reduces logistics costs and that results in shipment of merchandise within the limits of merchandise required to be maintained for the first inventory and within the limits of merchandise required to be maintained for the second inventory according to an algorithm employing at least the one or more first metrics, the one or more second metrics, the first data and the second data.